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NSC BRIEFING

JULY 1968

INDOCHINA

1. Major military news: SOUTHERN LAOS  
FRENCH southern Laos.

A. Army attaches form French with-

drawals as Reg. Southern as  
"Operation Atlanta" in progress

1. "Atlanta" leaves Southern  
clear enemy from ARVN coastal  
strip, started well, but  
operation flagged down in  
face enemy pressure.

B. French withdrawing from An Khe  
to Pleiku 25 June when attacked,  
lost over 1,000 men, entire

mobile group HQ, 2200 remain.

C. Heavy pressure southern Laos  
makes French influence less even  
small sectors there problematical

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1. Aside from region adjacent Cochinchina, Pleiku and Ban Me Thout are now only important French centers plus local areas.
2. Plateau areas important in denying Viet Minh lateral routes to Laos, Cambodia.  
Also, Ban Me Thout long-term dream of economic development of its region.
3. Viet Minh build-up may be designed establish base this area for improved bargaining position in possible partition talks, also for later penetration Laos, Cambodia and Cochinchina after truce.

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- II. In Cambodia, only bright spot of past week. Cambodian army evidenced much improvement.
- A. Two battalions scored successes south of Phnom Penh.
  - B. Cambodian units defeated one battalion near Kratie, sent it retreating northward.

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